

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-05

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 192428

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT KHARTOUM 1878 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ADDIS

ABABA ASMARA DATED 13 AUG 75

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1878

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ET

SUBJECT: CISCO TWO: INTERVIEW WITH AMERICAN PRISONERS

1. FRENCH AMBASSADOR THIS MORNING ASKED CHARGE TO CALL
AND THEN INTRODUCED CHARGE TO LUCIEN BITTERLIN AS SECRETARY
GENERAL OF "ASSOCIATION DE SOLIDAITE FRANCO-ARABE" AND
DIRECTOR OF ASSOCIATION'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE CALLED "FRANCE
PAYS ARABE." BITTERLIN HAS JUST ARRIVED KHARTOUM
ACCOMPANIED BY PLF REPEAT PLF REPRESENTATIVE WHO ACCOMPANIED
HIM DURING RECENT TRAVEL THROUGH ERITREA.

2. BITTERLIN SAID THAT ON AUGUST 5 HE HAD INTERVIEWED
AMERICAN PRISONERS CAMPBELL AND HARRELL AT A PLF CAMP
APPROXIMATELY MIDWAY BETWEEN NAKFA AND ALGHENA IN NORTHERN
ERITREA. BITTERLIN ESTIMATED THAT CAMP WAS 100 KILOMETERS
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FROM SUDANESE BORDER.

3. BITTERLIN SAID THAT THE TWO AMERICANS WERE IN GOOD HEALTH AND WELL CARED FOR. AERIAL BOMBING BY ETHIOPIAN FORCES HAD OCCURRED AUGUST 3 BUT WITHOUT DAMAGE TO CAMP. HE SAID THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO JUDGE FROM THE APPEARANCE OF THE CAMP WHETHER THE PLF UNIT HAD ANY IMMEDIATE TRAVEL PLANS.

4. BITTERLIN CONDUCTED A BRIEF INTERVIEW WITH CAMPBELL AND HARRELL AND WILL PLAY THE TAPE FOR CHARGE LATER THIS AFTERNOON. HE IS MOST RELUCTANT TO SURRENDER THE TAPE OR ALLOW US TO COPY IT, SINCE HE IS RETURNING TO PARIS ON AUGUST 15 AND MAY BE ABLE TO PLACE INTERVIEW IN FRENCH PRESS.

5. BITTERLIN ALSO HANDED CHARGE UNSEALED LETTER FROM CAMPBELL TO HIS WIFE IN ASMARA WHICH BEING POUCHED ASMARA AUGUST 14. CAMPBELL WRITES THAT HE AND HARRELL ARE EATING WELL, ARE IN GOOD HEALTH AND ARE TREATED VERY WELL. HE CHARACTERIZES THE FORCES HOLDING THEM AS "HELPFUL AND HUMANE." HE CONTINUES TO SAY THAT THE "FIGHTERS ARE VERY GOOD PEOPLE AND VERY CONCERNED FOR OUR NEEDS. THEY HAVE GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO INSURE OUR EVERY NEED." CAMPBELL'S LETTER STATES THAT PARTY SPENT FIRST 12 DAYS AFTER CAPTURE TRAVELLING CONTINUALLY BY FOOT BUT THEY HAD BEEN RELATIVELY STATIONARY DURING SUBSEQUENT 11 DAYS (UP TO AUGUST 5).

6. WILL CABLE CONTENTS OF TAPED INTERVIEW LATER TODAY.
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UNQUOTE
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To: BEIRUT
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